

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application.

Claims 1-8 have been amended to substitute the routinely used “wherein” for the less common “characterized in that” and to delete all drawing reference numerals from the claims. These changes were made for purposes of clarification unrelated to patentability concerns.

Claim 1 has been amended to improve its clarity.

No claims have been canceled or withdrawn.

New claim 9 has been added. New claim 9 finds support throughout the Specification. No new matter has been added.

I. SPECIFICATION OBJECTION

The Abstract of the disclosure was objected to because it exceeds 150 words in length. The replacement Abstract is submitted as set forth above. The Applicants submit that the above objection is thus overcome.

II. CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35 U.S.C. § 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Claims 1-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. The Office Action states that the Applicants disclosed only one set of the at least one feed channel and only one set of the at least one delivery channel, while claim 1 recites the screens which are fluidically connected to another set of the at least one feed channel and to another set of the at least one delivery channel.

The Applicants respectfully traverse the above 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection. Contrary to the Office Action's assertion, the Applicants do disclose devices with the multiple feed and delivery channels throughout the specification, specifically in par. [0042]:

For the sake of simplicity, the embodiments shown in the drawings are each shown with a single feed channel 2 and a single delivery channel 3. In practice, it is usually preferable to provide more than one feed channel 2 and delivery channel 3, in which case it is simply necessary to preserve the aforementioned connection relationships.

The Applicants submit that the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection is thus overcome.

III. CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Bacher et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,308,484), hereinafter Bacher, in view of Schwanekamp (U.S. Patent No. 5,779,898). The Office Action alleges that Bacher discloses all the limitations of independent claim 1, with exception of the at least one control body displaceable in the housing (emphasis added). The missing disclosure is allegedly provided by Schwanekamp.

Applicants traverse the above rejection for the reasons set forth below. The secondary reference Schwanekamp does not provide what is missing from the primary reference Bacher, because Schwanekamp does not disclose or suggest at least the following limitations of claim 1: at least one control body (31) which is (i) displaceable in housing (1) relative to carrying body (4), and is (ii) associated with each nest of screens (8, 9) for the backwashing of the nest of screens (8, 9) portion by portion.

Schwankamp does not disclose or suggest control body 31 of claim 1. Schwankamp discloses valve device 4, which can be rotated from a filtering to a backwashing position (col. 13, lines 34-43). However, assuming that Schwankamp's valve device 4 discloses or suggests control body 31 of claim 1, which it does not, Schwankamp's valve device 4 is not (i) displaceable in the housing relative to the carrying body, as recited in claim 1, for at least two reasons. First, Schwankamp's valve devices 3 and 4 are configured in a separate valve chamber 15, which is attached to the housing containing filters 13. Thus, valve devices 3 and 4 are not part of the housing containing the filters (see, e.g. Figs. 5 and 6). Therefore, Schwankamp's valve devices 3 and 4, since not disposed in the housing that contains the filters, cannot be displaceable in the housing containing the filters, i.e. relative to the carrying body that contains the nests of screens (the filters), as recited in claim 1.

Second, Schwanekamp's valve device 4 is not displaceable in the housing relative to the carrying body, as required by claim 1. Claim 1 recites at least one carrying body 4, which houses the nests of screens. The carrying body can be moved up and down or rotated with respect to housing 1. Furthermore, claim 1 also recites at least one control body 31 that is displaceable relative to the carrying body. In contrast to the device of claim 1, Schwanekamp's valve device 4 is not displaceable relative to the carrying body, because if displaced up or down in valve chamber 15, the displacement of valve device 4 would result in the longitudinal misalignment of holes 17a and 17b with respect to duct 17c, thus rendering the entire Schwanekamp apparatus inoperative (see, e.g. Fig. 6 of Schwanekamp). Therefore, a person skilled in the art could not use the teachings of Schwanekamp to arrive at the valve device that is displaceable relative to the carrying body, as required by claim 1.

Furthermore, Schwanekamp nowhere discloses or suggests the backwashing of the nest screens portion by portion, as also required by claim 1 (see, e.g., Figs. 4 or 6 of the present disclosure). Schwanekamp consistently discloses the filter backwashing method which operates over an entire filter (see, e.g., Figs. 7, 12, or 18 of Schwanekamp). Nevertheless, even if a person skilled in the art attempted to use Schwanekamp's disclosure to arrive at a device capable of portion by portion backwashing of the nest screens, such a device would fail to operate as required by claim 1, because Schwanekamp filter 13 does not have any upstream or downstream partition that would enable the portion by portion segmentation of the filter backwashing. Thus, Schwanekamp does not disclose or suggest portion by portion backwashing of the nest screens.

The Office Action states that control body 31 of claim 1 is disclosed by Schwanekamp's valve device 4 or, in the alternative, its stop valve 30. The Applicants respectfully point out that Schwanekamp's stop valve 30 only functions in conjunction with its valve device 4, and not alone, as disclosed by Schwanekamp's third embodiment shown in Figs. 9-14. Schwanekamp's stop valve 30 cannot be used separately from its valve device 4. The deficiencies of the valve device 4 disclosure in rendering claim 1 obvious are explained in detail above. Since Schwanekamp's stop valve 30 must be used in conjunction with valve device 4, the deficiencies of Schwanekamp are not cured by the stop valve 30 disclosure.

Therefore, at least for the above reasons, the Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is not obvious over Bacher in view of Schwanekamp. Claims 2-8, which are non-obvious in their own right, are also non-obvious because they add the limitations to their base claim 1.

New claim 9

New independent claim 9 is also not obvious over Bacher in view of Schwanekamp because, inter alia, neither Bacher nor Schwanekamp disclose or suggest a backwashable filtering device having at least one control body that is: movable relative to the carrying body and relative to other control bodies, configurable for backwashing either an entire nest of screens or a selectable portion of the nest of screens, and is in the flow path only in the backwashing position, and out of the flow path in the filtering position.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and a formal notification to that effect at an early date is requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at (415) 273-4317 (direct dial).

Respectfully submitted,

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